

LAW FIZZLES AS HUMAN ROCKET

900 Pounds of Powder as Tail Piece Blows Out, Not Up.

STEEL WALLS BURST

Passenger the Only Thing in Vicinity Not Broken to Bits.

TAKES DROP OF 50 FEET

Thousands in Jersey See the Fireworks-Movie-Suicide Performance.

Rodman Law, who has flirted with death so often that he can stare that well known person right out of countenance, tried to qualify as the Human Skyrocket yesterday afternoon. He did not do it.

Instead of going up in the air for hundreds and hundreds of feet just ahead of 900 pounds of powder, and then being shot out into space like a spark on Fourth of July night, to float down on a parachute while moving picture men busily reeled underneath, the aviator-high jumper simply fell fifty feet as fast as it ever has been done.

The big steel rocket that had been constructed for the stunt couldn't stand the strain and exploded, dumping him out on soft ground, which saved his life.

All this happened over in Jersey City, near the factory of the International Fireworks Company, at the Newark Bay end of Williams street. More than a thousand persons witnessed the performance after waiting around in the soggy marshes of the salt meadows for several hours while the fireworks people and the moving picture men scrapped with a detachment of Jersey city police, who couldn't see their way clear to letting, as they expressed it, "that fool commit suicide in this town." Finally they were brought around and retired to a distance to watch the doings.

Those who witnessed the affair can't understand how Law came out alive. Everything else in the immediate vicinity was blown to bits, but the performer came down to earth with nothing worse than a few contusions and abrasions and a million or so bells ringing in his ears. Sweet oil was all that was needed to patch him up, but "all the king's horses and all the king's men" couldn't put that steel rocket together again. It simply isn't any more.

The performance was to have started yesterday at half-past 2, but it was 4 o'clock before the obdurate police gave in, and then the air was so foggy that the moving picture men weren't sure they'd be able to get any pictures at all. But Law, who doesn't care how often he places his life in jeopardy, announced that people would think he was a quitter if he didn't carry out his part, so he intended to go right ahead. He did, only not in the precise direction he had expected.

The idea of having a man go up in a skyrocket and return to earth on a parachute originated in some fantastic brain quite a while ago. This brain belonged to a man in the fireworks place and in time he communicated the idea to a moving picture concern with the suggestion that people in every quarter of the globe would be interested in seeing films of such a thing. That's how Rodman Law got into the play, for whenever anything extra hazardous and hopeless and apparently foolish comes along, he is the man to try it.

When the moving picture people heard the fireworks company proposed that they should communicate the idea to the latter to go ahead and build the rocket, and at the proper time they'd furnish somebody to make the ascent. So for several months John Sorpico and Sam Sorpico and Cousin John Sorpico, and in fact lots of Sorpicoes who make the pyrotechnics, worked like everything and tried experiment after experiment.

First they sent up some model rockets, built with a compartment at the top for transients, and they worked all right. Next they borrowed somebody's dog and tied a little parachute about his middle and sent him up. The dog didn't come back.

Next they borrowed a cat and sent her up. The cat didn't come back. So they got another dog and sent him up, and he didn't come back.

Finally Cousin John Sorpico concluded that the rocket had reached such a state of perfection, and anyhow the neighbors were getting stingy with their dogs and cats, that it would be safe to try it on his own dog.

Therefore a sample rocket was built with unusual care and Teddy, a shaggy brown admixture of St. Bernard and collie, was placed aboard, with a parachute firmly attached to his person.

And he went up and he came back, and to prove it Cousin John showed him to a SUN reporter yesterday in M. Colerod's place, where he was strutting around because he had done something Rodman Law hadn't.

Three weeks ago the Sorpicoes sent word to the movies that they would be ready very soon, and even appointed the day. This was yesterday, and in the meantime they built the biggest rocket that was ever seen.

The rocket was shaped like one of the ordinary kind, only it was made all of steel and had a telegraph pole for a tail. At the top was a loose cap opening into a little sort of room about four feet high and thirty inches in diameter. Here the man was supposed to sit with his parachute as long as he could.

The flooring underneath him was of sheet iron and a couple of feet further down was a steel floor, between the two being sand and sawdust tightly packed to prevent any inquisitive missiles from sneaking through. Below the steel was a compartment for the powder, and the Sorpicoes stuffed 900 pounds of a composition combustible in here, or at least they did if 900 pounds of powder will get into a space thirty inches across and about four feet deep.

All this contrivance was built about a

PICTURES SHOW HOW LAW WAS INJURED



Shot into the Air With His Parachute



How He Landed.



Ready for the Ascent

regular telegraph pole thirty-four feet long, alongside of which dangled a fuse that was to burn for a minute before it started the motor. In all the rocket was ten feet long, thirty inches inside diameter and thirty-six outside.

It weighed five tons, quipped Cousin John Sorpico, and although it didn't look so, and it was slanted up against a framework of planks with a little platform, from which the parachute person was expected to enter what seemed likely to be his final resting place.

In order that the man part of the rocket shouldn't come down with the rocket, the inventors fixed up in the floor on which he crouched a very powerful spring. The theory was that the powder would burn up to this—a rocket goes up only so long as the powder is still exploding inside—and at the very top of the flight release it and send the occupant hurtling out into the clouds.

After that it was up to him and the parachute and the well known laws of gravity and chance and various other things that the New Jersey Legislature has nothing to do with.

Well, all the arrangements were made, the rocket was finished and Law came down to the factory with the camera welders. He didn't seem to be a bit afraid, though Teddy, who was on hand for the ceremony, could have told him a lot of things about being a human rocket. The parachute man was clad in heavy padded clothing, and in his ears he placed coins held by earbuds, to deaden the sound of the explosion. At 4 o'clock he was prepared and climbed the ladder and into the rocket, sticking his head out of the cap a second later to say to those below, "See you later, boys."

Then the cap being closed down Sam Sorpico climbed the ladder to the platform, lighted a match, touched it to the fuse and descended the ladder as if in haste.

By this time the spectators had retired to a conservative distance and were standing with fingers in their ears and their eyes fixed about where the planet Mars would have been if it had. John Sorpico was telling everybody who couldn't hear that the blamed thing was likely to go five miles. It seemed as if Law would come down somewhere in the neighborhood of the glue factory over near Newark.

Suddenly there was a terrific explosion. A huge cloud of smoke obscured the rocket and frame and everything else. The onlookers screamed the sky for Law and his steel jacket. Nothing was visible.

Then in a second or so a gust of wind blew away the smoke and everybody knew what the sound was that had seemed to them like the patter of huge hailstones on a tin roof. The steel jacket of the rocket had burst beneath the terrific strain and gone flying in a million pieces. The telegraph pole tail was shattered and the framework against which the rocket had rested had collapsed.

At first there was no sign of Law. Then Sam Sorpico rushed forward with a shout. Underneath the planks of the framework, now on the ground in a heap, he spied the body of a man. It was Law and it seemed as if he must be dead. But Sam shook him and soon he looked up, sort of surprised.

"Oh, hello!" he said. "I thought the thing was going up."

The aviator's face was bleeding and fearing he had suffered a serious injury he was taken into the fireworks company's office and examined. But nothing worse than a few minor hurts was found and he quickly put on his street clothes and started for his home in Brooklyn with a pretty young woman who had been in that crowd, though he hadn't noticed it before.

Law landed about twenty feet away from the foot of the framework, making his fall something over fifty feet. But he hit in a soft spot and wasn't bothered a bit.

BIG TIM'S THEATRE VENTURES IN COURT

Action Begun to Dissolve His Partnership With George Kraus.

A RECEIVER IS ASKED FOR SUM SAID TO BE \$100,000 Due Sullivan, His Committee Says.

Action has been begun on behalf of the committee of the person and estate of Timothy D. Sullivan for a dissolution of the partnership existing for fifteen years between Big Tim and George Kraus in the control of the Dewey, Savoy and Olympic theatres.

William B. Ellison, as counsel for the committee, served the papers upon Mr. Kraus on Tuesday and the case will shortly go on the calendar of the court. In the summons and complaint signed by the committee, which consist of Lawrence Mulliken, Frank J. Farrell, Emanuel Blumenfeld and Patrick H. Sullivan, it is alleged that a dissolution of the firm and an accounting is necessary because much of the profits due to Mr. Sullivan have not yet been paid to him, a sum said to amount to \$100,000 or more.

A receiver is asked to take charge of the firm and also for an injunction which will prevent Mr. Kraus or any other person from continuing to handle the affairs of the company.

The present suit, according to the papers, is due to the refusal of Mr. Kraus to make any accounting to the committee. It is alleged that when they notified him that such action would be necessary and that they had elected to terminate the partnership they were met with a preliminary refusal to give them any information.

The big fellow's partnership with ex-State Senator Kraus in the Victoria Theatre, on Fourteenth street, later known as the Dewey, was Sullivan's first theatrical venture, and it was a success from the start. The men never signed papers of partnership, nor entered into any written agreement. The understanding was that it was to be terminated at will.

As the Dewey prospered they went into the old Savoy in Thirty-fourth street and later took up the Olympic. Originally all these theatres were burlesque and combination houses, but later succumbed to the moving picture vogue.

In the papers filed it is contended that much of the profits due to Sullivan have been drawn out by others and that much of the property of the firm has been diverted from its proper use. There are said to be outstanding obligations overdue which should have been paid and which are chargeable to the partners as individuals as well as jointly.

The firm is solvent in every way, it is said, and the action is taken to protect the interests of Mr. Sullivan.

TEACHER'S BODY IN THE BAY.

Hugo Dirks Left Note on Pier for His Wife.

The body of Hugo Dirks, teacher of German in Public School 10, Fifteenth street, between Third and Fourth avenues, was found off the Morse Iron Works, at the foot of Fifty-seventh street, Brooklyn, yesterday morning. It was sent to the Brooklyn morgue.

A letter was found on the pier stamped and addressed to Mrs. K. Dirks, wife of the dead man, who lives at 674 Union avenue, The Bronx. The letter notified her, and during the afternoon Cur Dirks, son of the dead man, identified the body as that of his father.

VETERANS DRINK TOO MUCH.

Bad Conditions at Soldiers' Home Laid to Gen. Grubb.

The New Jersey legislative committee to investigate the affairs of the Home for Disabled Soldiers at Kearney, N. J., of which Gen. E. Burd Grubb is superintendent, met again at the home yesterday and heard from Dr. Eugene H. Goldberg, surgeon of the institution, some of its workings.

The society is determined to drive these fellows out of the business," said Mr. Merin yesterday. "It is proceeding just as the County Medical Association is proceeding and it has already engaged counsel and begun proceedings in some cases. It has about twenty-five or thirty cases in preparation."

"The only particular abuse we have started to end is that of many hands of men who go about in apartment houses and tenements, principally in those neighborhoods where English is not easily understood. One or two of these men, one of them carrying a black satchel, will enter an apartment and confront the woman with: 'We are from the Board of Health. We have been sent here to examine the eyes of your family. We have been told that there is something seriously wrong. Of course you know if this continues there will be jail.'

"That frightens the women. The name Board of Health is enough for them and they readily fall in line for the family examination. There is something wrong with one member, rarely more than one, and straightway the man with the black bag opens his satchel and in a few minutes have cheap brass or aluminum frames, which they say are the proper ones and must be bought for \$5 or \$6 at once. If there is much more in the house it is paid over. If there isn't the woman in some cases goes out and borrows it. Our committee has under investigation at the Hotel York, which is kind and in several of these we are about ready to act."

Mr. Merin told of a man in Harlem who set forth on his card that he held an "expert certificate," that is, that he had been practicing before the law of New York was passed. This man is charged with representing himself as a man from the Board of Health in one instance. Mr. Merin has a letter from Health Commissioner Lederle saying that the man never was employed by him and a letter from the State authorities to the effect that he did not have any certificate so far as the records show.

"I am glad to say that the Health Department and the County Medical Association will cooperate with us in every way," continued Mr. Merin. "The one fact we want the public to know is that any person going to them and pretending to come from the Board of Health or any other official body will have something to show for it, and if it is not shown they should call a policeman. In one case a

MRS. TRUFANT NAMES SUITORS.

Actress Suing H. G. Williams Says F. M. Andrews Was One.

Mrs. Ruth L. Trufant, who has a suit for \$50,000 damages for breach of promise against Henry G. Williams, proprietor of the Hotel York, testified before a referee yesterday that one of the applicants for her hand was Frank M. Andrews, architect and builder of the Hotel McAlbin, who subsequently married Pauline Frederick, an actress.

Andrews and Miss Frederick separated recently, but it developed during the testimony of Mrs. Trufant that the time she said Andrews wanted to marry her he had not yet been divorced from a previous wife.

The plaintiff was an actress. Her stage name was Mada Athens. In her testimony before trial the plaintiff said that she was married in Colorado in 1902 when she was not yet 20 to William G. Trufant. She lived with him only two months because he didn't support her, and then he got a divorce for desertion. She came to New York and went on the stage, and soon after her arrival took a room at the Hotel York.

Mrs. Trufant said that Andrews proposed marriage to her in 1907 and told her he was getting a divorce so he could marry her. She says he gave her \$2,500 for a trip to Europe.

Mrs. Trufant said that Williams followed her abroad and had her send the \$2,500 back to Andrews. After she learned that Williams had a wife he gave her \$7,000, she said, but she denied that this was in settlement.

Butcher Out of Work Ends Life.

August Schler, 30 years old, a butcher out of work, committed suicide last night by leaping from the window of his apartment at 841 Forest avenue, The Bronx, into the araway below.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

A Perfect Shampoo in Five Minutes

"Much depends on what you use when shampooing," says Mae Martyn, in the Los Angeles News. "Great injury is often done the hair and scalp by employing harmful mixtures for this purpose, while a simple thing like catnip almost works wonders in cleansing the hair and scalp."

"After a catnip shampoo the scalp is soft and pliant and the hair will have regained its original lustre and fluffiness and is easier to do up."

"Dissolve a teaspoonful of catnip in a teacup of hot water and shampoo the head well with this, then rinse thoroughly and dry. You will be agreeably surprised at the result."

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OPTICAL FAKERS ROB POOR PARENTS

Pose as School Inspectors, Examine Eyes and Order Glasses.

HIGH PRICES CHARGED

At Least 700 Charlatans, Optical Society Says, Are Operating Here.

The wandering oculist who goes about in tenements proclaiming that he is from the Board of Health, the optician who examines your eyes free of charge and proposes to fit glasses for them, the six or seven hundred other men who examine eyes and sell glasses in the city without having received a legal certificate of their qualification are threatened with hard times, which may mean fine and imprisonment.

The Ophthalmological Society of the City of New York has announced that it is going after all unlicensed practitioners in the city. It has already given earnest of what it intends to do by making one illegal optometrist plead guilty in the General Sessions and having another man's certificate revoked.

The society was chartered in 1900 after the passage of the law of 1900, which requires that before examining eyes or prescribing glasses a person must take a two years course in some reputable college and pass an examination before the Board of Regents. There are about two thousand men in the city who have been licensed either after examination or because they had practiced for a sufficient period before the law was enacted. According to the society there are at least 700 men in the city to-day who will examine eyes and prepare glasses at any price the victim may be able to pay.

The officers of the Ophthalmological Society, which has a growing membership, are: E. E. Hotelling, president; B. H. Brooke, vice-president; F. W. Blair, secretary, and C. W. Rives, registrar. The members of the executive committee, which is in charge of the move against the unlicensed, are: A. L. Merin, chairman; Albert Cohen, S. P. Ward, J. H. Drakeford and E. LeRoy Lyster.

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Adjuster Freeman Says He Made \$25,000 a Year by Honest Enterprise

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The case will go to the jury to-day.

MRS. EDGELL'S CASE NOT YET FINISHED

Woman Commissioner Says She Has Data as to Other Teachers.

Mrs. Catherine C. Edgell, the Erasmus Hall High School instructor in physical culture, whose application for a year's leave of absence for the purpose of becoming a mother was denied by the Board of Education, may take her case to the courts if the board attempts to dismiss her for taking the leave without permission.

Prof. Walter B. Gunnison, principal of the Erasmus School, said yesterday that an appeal to the courts probably would follow entertainment by the board of charges of neglect of duty against Mrs. Edgell. He pointed out that the Court of Appeals had declared unconstitutional a former school by-law that the marriage of a school teacher should militate for automatic dismissal.

"I am certain that the Edgell case involves the same principle," Prof. Gunnison added. "I have on file in my office a certificate from Dr. Herbert C. Allen, of 172 Lexington place, Brooklyn, to the effect that Mrs. Edgell is not physically able to discharge her duties as teacher in the school. In any event, Mrs. Edgell, who is fond of teaching, will find work in a private school if the right to teach in the public schools is denied her. I am surprised that the Board of Education shut off debate yesterday."

Commissioner Olivia Leventritt, a champion of Mrs. Edgell, believes the matter is not closed yet.

It is regarded as certain that charges of neglect of duty will be preferred against Mrs. Edgell and the whole matter may come up again.

Mrs. Edgell last night refused to speak about the matter.

QUAKER CITY WOULD REFUSE

Authority Says Permission Would Be Unfair to Other Women.

PHILADELPHIA, March 13.—The Board of Education and many of the school teachers here are discussing the action of the New York board in refusing the application of Mrs. Edgell for leave of absence on account of the coming of the stork.

Two years ago the Philadelphia board adopted a rule that a woman who marries loses her position. There are several married women teaching here, but they were teachers before the adoption of the new rule. Married women who do not live with their husbands or whose husbands are ill and unable to support them are not barred.

One of the assistant superintendents said to-day: "If a request like Mrs. Edgell's were granted here it might lead to complete disorganization of the force of women teachers. To grant it to one would be manifestly unfair to others who might want leave of absence for the same reason."

The application was made by Thomas H. Allen, a creditor, who said that he had just discovered that William F. Caroll, trustee of Mr. Kingsland, had been made a party to four equity suits in Kings county concerning property under the will of Mr. Kingsland. Mr. Allen thinks that there may be some property coming to Mr. Kingsland from these suits.

Mr. Kingsland had an estate of \$18,000 a year from a trust fund under the will of Ambrose C. Kingsland.

KINGSLAND CASE REOPENED.

New Assets of Ex-Mayor's Nephew Found Since Bankruptcy Discharge.

Judge Hand has reopened the bankruptcy proceedings in the case of Albert A. Kingsland, former mayor of New York, nephew of a former Mayor of New York, who received a discharge on March 18, 1912 and has sent the case back to William H. Miller, referee.

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HANG UP YOUR COAT, STEAL IT, THEN SUE

So It Goes in the Restaurants Since Court Decided Against Riggs.

BRETHREN FLY TO ARMS

Takes an Appeal to Stop Claims for Fictitious But Valuable Garments.

The stoney brokers, the hucksters, their relatives have been trying a new route to easy affluence and square meals since the Appellate Term of the Supreme Court handed down a decision four weeks ago saying that Riggs's restaurant in Thirty-third street between Fifth avenue and Broadway would have to pay one Wentworth \$30 for a six winters overcoat which was stolen from a hook while Mr. Wentworth dined.

So says Leon C. Riggs, proprietor of the restaurant, and in this he is corroborated by the management of the Chalk restaurants, the Codrington restaurants, the Drake restaurants and many more of the no cost variety.

When the court said that Riggs was responsible for a coat that had not been checked many persons who have lost overcoats in restaurants in the last five years began to file claims. The office manager of the Chalks company looked over a file of such claims, all received since the decision against Riggs, and sent the Chalks attorney around to Hugo Whitney and C. Von Oden Hughes, Riggs's attorneys, to offer moral support or advice if either was desired.

Two weeks after the decision Riggs had claims from as far away as Seattle. He filed application for leave to appeal to the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court and that application was granted yesterday.

"It's simply giving all of the crooks in town a chance for easy money," he said last night. "If this decision stands we'll have lawsuits on our hands all the year around. I'm sure that a great majority of the claims registered with me since this decision have been made by persons who have not lost coats or anything else in my place."

Perley Codrington had much the same story to tell as Riggs and the Chalk management. Listen to him: "Two confederates come in, one with a coat, the other with a suitcase. They sit at separate places and order to eat worth of food. The coatless one gets up first and takes his suitcase. He goes out. Then the original coat owner gets up to find his garment gone. How are we to tell whether the man is honest or not?"

"I've been forced to place detectives in some of my restaurants, but at a busy time of day even they can't be sure of their game. I have signs up that the restaurant is not responsible for lost articles, but I can't compel my patrons to check their hats and coats if they don't want to."